

NO. 65. AN ACT RELATING TO MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENT.

(H.537)

Sec. 122b. SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT SYSTEM; REPORT AND PLAN

While over the past four years systematic efforts have been made to enhance prevention and treatment services in communities across Vermont, and partnerships have been engaged between the agency of human services, courts, community providers, and schools, substance abuse presents a major health challenge to Vermonters and their families:

(1) Early use by youth results in a high number of teens and preteens using alcohol and drugs regularly.

(2) Untreated problems develop into serious addictive disorders in the adult population.

(3) The growing number of individuals incarcerated due to their drug/alcohol use presents a challenge to the criminal justice system.

(4) Crises resulting from severe alcoholism and drug dependence stress our emergency rooms and corrections facilities.

(b) The department of health shall convene a high level task force to include representation and participation from members of the preferred provider treatment system, to review the treatment services currently in place and to identify how to integrate them into a more systematic response to addictive problems.

(1) The task force will work with staff to analyze the population projected to be in need of treatment services, and will create a design for the services needed in communities by level of care, and to support long-term recovery. This plan should be based on the Blueprint for Health chronic care approach.

(A) Agency of human services field directors and district health directors shall map local services across the continuum of care and across the sectors from health to criminal justice. These maps will inform the task force's analysis of the services and supports that are currently available.

(2) The analysis shall be evidence-based and project numbers of people that can be diverted from more expensive and crisis-oriented services if we build a more continuous, recovery-based system of supports. Of particular interest is savings that can be realized in the department of corrections.

(3) The analysis shall also look at workforce preparation and what needs to be done to develop a mechanism for clinicians to be certified to treat co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.

(c) The department shall prepare and submit a report and plan by January 15, 2008 to the house and senate committees on appropriations.